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RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 002813

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE AND IPA; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/04/2016
TAGS: PREL ASEC CASC KPAL KWBG PHUM
SUBJECT: MGGZ01 - ISRAELI GAZA INCURSION - JERUSALEM JULY 4
SITREP

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles. Reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

Summary

¶1. (C) A 0600 ultimatum regarding kidnapped IDF Corporal Galid Shalit passed without any significant developments. The IDF arrested three al-Aqsa Brigades' militants implicated in the June 25 killing of Israeli settler Eliyahu Ahsheri. The PLC held an emergency session on July 3, focused on the arrest of Hamas ministers and officials. IDF forces continue to hold territory in northern and southern Gaza. IAF airstrikes and IDF raids continue. Post continues to work on expediting the passage of 90 American citizens from Gaza.

Kidnapping Update

¶2. (SBU) A 0600 ultimatum delivered by the Palestinian militant groups claiming responsibility for the kidnapping of IDF Corporal Gilad Shalit passed without any developments, other than the "Army of Islam" - one of the three groups - telling the press that "no new information will be given." However, an unidentified spokesman for one of the groups is later quoted by the Israeli media as saying "there are those who believe we will kill the soldier, but the principles of Islam command us to treat prisoners with respect and not to kill them." The AP quotes PLC member Mohammed Dahlan as saying the ultimatum was simply a negotiating tactic, and that discussions continue.

¶3. (SBU) IDF forces arrested on July 4 three al-Aqsa Brigade militants implicated in the killing of Israeli settler Eliyahu Asheri. The three were taken by the IDF from a Palestinian detention facility, where they were being held by Palestinian security forces. Asheri was reportedly kidnapped and killed on June 25, and Israeli press accounts quoting IDF sources say he was killed approximately one hour after he was abducted.

Political Update

¶4. (C) The Palestinian Legislative Council held an emergency session in Ramallah on July 3. PLC speaker Aziz Dweik, in remarks to the press, accused Israel of "kidnapping" Hamas officials without justification and said he was not afraid of being arrested. According to PLC member Sa'eb Erekat, who attended the session, the IDF arrests of Hamas ministers and officials dominated the session. Erekat said that, in the

current Palestinian atmosphere, there was no room for criticism of Hamas.

Military Update

15. (SBU) IDF forces reportedly continue their presence in southern and northern Gaza. Israeli shelling of unoccupied open areas reportedly continues. An IAF airstrike in Beit Hanoun late on July 3 reportedly killed a Hamas operative, and wounded several other people. The IAF also struck a building at the Islamic University in Gaza City early on July 4, with no reported injuries. In the West Bank town of Jenin, an IDF unit killed what they described as an al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade leader early on July 4.

AMCIT Update

16. (C) Over 90 American citizens who remain in Gaza have asked for USG assistance in departing. Liaison with the GOI and COGAT continues to satisfy new requirements raised by the GOI; Post may require high-level intervention in order to secure Israeli cooperation.

WALLES